Minimum Social Security benefits including health insurance, maternity benefit, insurance to cover natural death and death due to accident, old age pension to Below Poverty Line (BPL) workers above the age of 60 years and Provident Fund for Above Poverty Line (APL) workers.

The matter of providing social security to the workers in the unorganized sector *vis-a-vis* enactment of a legislation for such workers is under examination of the Government. The recommendations of the Commission would be taken into account while finalizing the proposal.

Job opportunities in industrial sector

†974. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a constant increase in the job opportunities in the industrial sector in each State during the last years;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the average annual growth rate of job opportunities assessed during the last three years in each State; and

(d) the reasons for difference in growth rate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) and (b) As per the Mid Term Appraisal undertaken by the Planning Commission, projected employment (on Current Daily Status Basis) in the country in various sectors including industrial sector have gone up from 344.68 million in 2001-02 to 362.64 million in 2004-05.

(c) and (d) State-wise details are not available.

Increasing demand of skilled labourers

†975. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in view of the continuously increasing export trade of certain industries of the country, the additional requirement of skilled labourers is increasing;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) the industries in which requirement of additional skilled workers is increasing; and

(d) the average annual rate of increase in the requirement of labourers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) to (c) In view of Globalization, Economic Liberalization and Technical Development taking place the demand for skilled workers has increased in all the sectors of the economy.

(d) Demand for Labour varies from place to place and from Industry to Industry. A very rough estimate indicate that 5 to 7 million additional workers were engaged in gainful activity on an average per year during last 3 years.

Retrenchment and closure of industrial units

976. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Trade Unions have objected to Government's proposal to allow firms with 300 or less employees to lay off, retrench and close, without Government's permission;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons/justifications for such a proposal; and

(d) the percentage of such industries in relation to all industrial units, benefits envisaged for industrial growth, labour reforms, employment generation etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The 2nd National Commission on Labour had given certain recommendations on lay-off, retrenchment and closure. It had recommended that prior permission was not necessary in respect of lay-off and retrenchment in an establishment of any employment size. However, in the case of establishments employing 300 or more workers, if the lay off continued for more than 30 days, *post facto* permission of the appropriate Government would be required. The Commission further recommended that the provision of Chapter V-B of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.